



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Division of Performance and Accountability  
2010-2011**

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**The Willoughby School**

**K162**

**1390 Willoughby Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11237**

**Principal: Barbara De Martino**

**Dates of review: March 7 - 8, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Melissa Silberman**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Willoughby school is a Middle School with 731 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 6.6% Black, 87.9% Hispanic, 1.1% White, and 4.3% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 13.6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions that are well aligned to support the school's instructional goals which improve student outcomes.
  - The principal reorganized use of teacher time to support common planning time among special education teachers to ensure the school's goal of providing special needs students with rigorous instruction, resulting in higher pass rates on state exams for special education students.
  - The principal with the support of her cabinet has adjusted the use of professional periods to schedule teacher meeting times three days a week. This supports the successful implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) where staff focuses on the CEP and PPR goals for the year. As a result, teacher teams now work closely with specific groups of students to ensure their academic success.
- The faculty makes informed choices regarding the inclusion of State standards to identify key areas of focus to improve student outcomes.
  - Teachers have a keen awareness of the Common Core Standards and have galvanized as a school wide team to ensure curriculum maps include writing standards across all grades with a focus on narrative, informational and persuasive writing. An analysis of performance data has indicated a 6% increase in English Language Arts (ELA) scores.
  - Teachers gather and utilize student work pieces to ensure that curriculum is based upon individual student needs. Consequently, classroom work is deeply differentiated and challenging based upon student data.
- Across all classrooms, routines and teaching strategies reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that results in instructional practices which increases academic achievement.
  - All students complete a learning styles inventory to help them and their teachers understand how they learn best. This, combined with an analysis of test scores supports differentiated lessons which utilizes school wide test data and anecdotal student information that is updated on an ongoing basis. This has led to higher course pass rates for all students.
  - Teachers engage in the routine of regular evaluation of student progress through the practice of exit slips. This supports high engagement in lessons and students are reflective about their learning which has resulted in higher pass rates on benchmark exams.
- Teachers utilize assessments to clearly identify student needs and analyze results by subgroup and grade level in order to ensure that coursework meets students at their entry levels.
  - Teacher teams organized in Professional Learning Communities collaborate to create assessments that are aligned to State standards and

the curriculum to identify students' needs and strengths. They undertake a careful analysis of the results that informs adjustments to the curriculum and instructional practices. Consequently 85% of students have shown an increase in the English Language Arts (ELA) scores on Achieve 3000 and 65% of students in grades 6-8 have shown a 12% increase in the Math predictive exam scores.

- Math and ELA teachers meet and pool assessment materials, and lesson plans and organize assessments by standards. This process has informed student and teacher schedules for the next term in order to ensure subgroups of students such as English Language Learners, have appropriate academic interventions to support learning.
- The principal and her dedicated cabinet support teacher's professional growth by continually using student data in classroom observations to provide staff with actionable feedback for differentiated next steps.
  - The administration conducts approximately thirty five informal observations a week and utilizes a common feedback form to document teacher practices and patterns. This data is analyzed at cabinet meetings and used to inform professional development offerings and supports for staff that strengthen effective instructional practices organized around the school's focus of improving academic language and writing across the curriculum.
  - In collaboration with the school's network the cabinet has a deeply articulated teacher tenure packer that includes key areas for teacher evaluation including a framework for teaching. In addition, the principal meets with the cabinet regularly to evaluate weekly observation logs. This has resulted in the support of all principal level tenure decisions and a staff with a long tenure in the school community
- The principal has a concise and developed vision for the school's future development that has resulted in the ongoing use of Individualized learning goals for every student to increase academic performance.
  - The school leader has articulated three goals which include data assessment, adoption of core standards and the addition of academic vocabulary at the classroom level which are included in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) with action plans that describe long range and interim plans. Professional development and teacher observations are focused on these goals. As a result, all lessons include one of the above foci to improve outcomes.
  - The principal has a weekly newsletter to update the staff on the progress the community is making toward their goals and each teacher team reports to the cabinet on their progress. This ongoing communication informs future planning and is documented and reviewed regularly to ensure the school meets interim and long term goals.
- The school has structures in place to routinely evaluate and adjust instructional practices, resulting in increased writing feedback protocols in ELA.
  - The school has extensive structures in place to evaluate curricular and instructional decisions aligned to the State standards. Staff participates in Professional Learning Communities to evaluate structures such as student

programming and course offerings. Teachers and Assistant principals hold regular department meetings to assess instructional strategies and adjust their classroom practice, such as the decision to implement writing across the curriculum resulting in higher pass rate in ELA classes.

- The Principal allocated funds to hire a Teacher's College consultant to provide training to the staff in genre writing and rubrics aligned to State standards. This has resulted in an increase in writing quality as evidenced in student writing products in narrative, memoir, response to literature and persuasive essays.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen strategies for providing targeted youth development supports that consistently align with students' learning needs and ensure that students are well known by at least one adult in the building.
  - The school does not utilize student data to set youth development related goals with the same frequency they set academic goals. Consequently opportunities are missed to support students with youth development targets in order to meet social emotional and academic needs.
  - The school has a guidance team that provides support to students by grade level and now has teams of staff assigned for grade level assemblies, and outreach to students. However these practices are not embedded, which does not allow the school to evaluate their effectiveness to ensure they are supporting the development of positive school wide culture.
- Increase the regularity with which school leaders and faculty gather and analyze data in order to accelerate academic growth for subgroups.
  - The administrative team reviews all academic and social data regularly. However, the findings are not regularly utilized among teacher teams, thereby limiting deeper curricular, instructional and social adjustments at the classroom level.
  - School leaders and faculty gather and analyze data to inform school wide instructional practices and curricular adjustments. However they don't meet with the same regularity to discuss trends in subgroups, as a result interventions cannot be regularly applied to develop specific actions to address identified needs.
- Establish methods for evaluating strategies to improve leadership development and collaborative decision making in order to support capacity building
  - The school has three professional development groups to support collaborative inquiry, build academic language and implement the Common Core Standards. However, the school lacks a system to ensure ongoing feedback from staff in order to improve professional development.
  - While staff is clearly empowered to teacher leadership positions within the school, few structures were evidenced that made clear how a teacher who was not involved could participate in leadership opportunities at the school. The lack of a formal structure limits the opportunity for all teachers to participate in leadership development.



## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The Willoughby School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				<b>X</b>
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?				<b>X</b>
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?				<b>X</b>
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				<b>X</b>			
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			<b>X</b>				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				<b>X</b>			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				<b>X</b>			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				<b>X</b>			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>